

# “THE DISCIPLE’S PRAYER”

## Matthew 6:7-15

Would you like to know how to pray? I have a bookshelf full of books on prayer, but I don’t think you could really learn how to pray by just reading several of those books. Maybe you know someone who is fervent and consistent in their prayer life. You could go to them and ask them to teach you everything they know about prayer. However, their teaching would pale in comparison to that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we open the pages of the New Testament, we are struck by the intimate communion the Son of God had with God the Father in prayer. At His baptism, He prayed and heaven was opened and the Father spoke to Him. Then there was the time He prayed, and He was transfigured before the eyes of Peter, James, and John. Do you remember the time He prayed at the gravesite of a friend, and Lazarus was raised from the dead? Time does not allow me to go over the full scope of our Lord’s prayer life. One thing you need to know is this—*Jesus knew how to pray!*

The passage we have been studying for several weeks now is called The Sermon on the Mount. In this great sermon, Jesus laid out His expectations for all who would declare themselves to be His followers. One thing is certain; living in His kingdom requires a strong prayer life.

Our text today is Jesus’ response to their desire to learn how to pray. Several things are significantly absent in this text...

- **Jesus makes no mention of where we are to pray.** Jesus Himself prayed in public and in private.
- **Jesus does not specify a specific time to pray.** Prayer was offered at special occasions, in times of great anxiety, during times of great blessing, and before meals.

- **Jesus did not insist on any particular posture.** Standing up, kneeling down, sitting upright, and lying prostrate are all acceptable to God.

This prayer also defines the attitude and spirit we ought to have...

- **“Our”** reflects unselfishness
- **“Father”** reflects family devotion
- **“Hallowed be Your name”** reflects reverence
- **“Your kingdom come”** reflects loyalty
- **“Your will be done”** reflects submission
- **“Give us this day our daily bread”** reflects dependence/faith
- **“Forgive us our debts. . .”** reflects penitence
- **“Do not lead us into temptation. . .”** reflects humility
- **“For Yours is the kingdom and the power”** reflects triumph
- **“And the glory”** reflects exultation
- **“Forever”** reflects hope.<sup>1</sup>

Prayer is such an integral part of our walk with the Lord. We’ve got to get it right. MacArthur observed...

**No matter how perfect a pattern this is, we must remember our Lord’s previous warning about our attitude in prayer. If our hearts are not right, even the Disciples’ Prayer can fall into misuse. So how do you make sure you have the right heart attitude? Just make sure you focus on God. That’s why this prayer is such a helpful model. Every phrase and petition focuses on God—on His person, His attributes, and His works. You prevent your prayers from being hypocritical or mechanical when you focus on God, not on yourself.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [\*Alone with God\*](#), MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 46.

<sup>2</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [\*Alone with God\*](#), MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 46.

Do you know why Jesus did not make a bunch of rules about prayer? He fully intended for this prayer to serve as a pattern of prayer. Let me show you. Here's the prayer itself...

**Matthew 6:9–13. . .**

**9** “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

**10** ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

**11** ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

**12** ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

**13** ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’

Here's the first part of the prayer. . .

**1. DELIGHT IN THE FATHER'S POSITION.**

Jesus taught His disciples to approach the living God as “Father.” It is true that all people can call God “Father” by reason of creation. But, in this instance, Jesus was referring to an intimate term (Abba) that was reserved only for those who would commit their lives to Him.

**John 1:12.** . . But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name.

When we pray, we are to remember that God is not some impersonal force. He is a person. When Jesus prayed, He used the word “*Father*” more than 70 times. So, we are to delight in our Father's position by coming to Him with the eagerness of a child. Prayer is not a ritual. It is a relationship with “*our Father who is in heaven*.”

*“Our Father”* should inspire confidence and love. The words *“which art in heaven”* should fill us with humility and awe.<sup>3</sup>

Just stop and think about your privilege. You get to call the God of all creation, Father. You get to enter into His awesome presence right in heaven itself. Listen, your Father has all the resources of heaven at His disposal. From this position, our great God rules and reigns. He is sovereign over everything. As you pray, you are to delight in the Father’s position.

## **2. DELIGHT IN THE FATHER’S PRAISE**

Catch these words—*“Hallowed be Your name.”* What an immense privilege we have to enter into the presence of the living and holy God with the words “Father.” Wait a minute. Are we to burst into His eternal presence without reverence?

Jesus taught His disciples to focus on how hallowed the name of God really was. *“Hallowed”* means to “set apart as holy, due all reverence.” Peter wrote, *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” (1 Pet. 3:15)* In the Bible, God is given some special names that reveal His character and glory.

- **Elohim reveals to us that He is the Creator God, mighty and strong.**
- **El Elyon reveals that He is the possessor of heaven and earth.**
- **Jehovah Jireh reveals that He is the Lord who provides.**
- **Jehovah Shalom reveals that He is the Lord our peace.**
- **Jehovah Tsidkenu reveals that He is the Lord our righteousness.**

\*The story is told of a benevolent king who at times would let his subjects come to him with their petitions. The king noticed that one man came every

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, [\*The Lord’s Prayer\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2005), Mt 6:9.

week but never asked anything of him. One day the king asked him why he never asked for anything.

“Sire,” the man replied, “several years ago, I was being led to the gallows. You rode by and I cried for mercy. You listened and gave me a pardon and set me free. I come to ask nothing of you because you have already given me everything. You gave me life and pardon and an opportunity to serve you. I come to bring something to you—the homage of my life, the love of my heart, and the offer of myself as your loyal and devoted servant.”

Prayer is not just about getting our needs met. It is delighting who the Father is and giving Him the praise He deserves. position and delighting in the Father’s praise. Prayer is the worship of our soul overflowing in heaven’s love language. It is sharing our life with Him and Him sharing His life with us.

### **3. DELIGHT IN THE FATHER’S PURPOSE**

“Your kingdom come.” In the Old Testament, God promised David...

**2 Samuel 7:12...** “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.”

Listen, God’s entire kingdom centers in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. To pray “*Thy kingdom come*” means that we want Christ to reign right now. Alan Redpath said...

**Before we can pray, “Lord, Thy kingdom come,” we must be willing to pray, “Lord, my kingdom go.”**

Later on Jesus will challenge His followers to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” So, before we go bursting into His presence, we must invite Him to rule in our hearts and lives. We must desire His kingdom more than anything else!

"Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"— Let's drill down on this idea of praying for God's will be done. Consider these verses...

**1 John 5:14–15**... This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

The word "confidence" speaks of the *free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance* that believers can have as they come into God's presence in prayer, a God whom we as believers address as "FATHER." This idea of confidence was picked up by the author of Hebrews who wrote...

**Hebrews 4:16**... Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

"That if we ask anything according to His will"— The verb is in the present tense, which speaks of continuous action. Confidence in our prayer life comes as we learn to pray according to His will.

George Mueller, who fed thousands of orphans with food provided in answer to prayer, said . . .

**Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It is laying hold of God's willingness.<sup>4</sup>**

Ron Dunn observed . . .

**There are some things God will do if we ask Him that He will not do if we don't ask Him.**

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<sup>4</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, "An Exposition of the New Testament Comprising the Entire 'BE' Series"—Jkt. (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), 1 Jn 5:14.

John Stott reminds us . . .

**Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or for bending his will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to his. It is by prayer that we seek God's will, embrace it and align ourselves with it. Every true prayer is a variation of the theme "your will be done."**

Take notice of this promise—*"he hears us."* This does not mean that God simply acknowledges that we have prayed but that he hears us favorably or, even better, answers us favorably (John 9:31; 11:41–42). What an encouragement for the believer to pray!<sup>5</sup>

(15) *"And if we know that He hears in whatever we ask"*—This verse expands on the thought of vs. 14. The believer can **know** that God will hear and answer a prayer that is according to His will.

*"We know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him"*  
Because God hears and listens to us, we can also be sure that God will respond positively to our petition. The present tense *"we have"* and not the future ("we will have"), indicates that God grants our requests immediately, even though His answer may not be immediately revealed. For instance, Abraham was promised a baby boy in answer to prayer, but he didn't receive him for 25 years!

Often, however, we do not have what we desire because we do not ask God (Jas 4:2). But when we do come to God in prayer, we must come in faith...

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<sup>5</sup>Daniel L. Akin, vol. 38, 1, 2, 3 *John*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 205.

**Mark 11:24**... “Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.”

This concept of praying within the framework of God’s will is essential. . .

**Ephesians 5:15–17**...Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. **17** So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Paul wrote about this in his letter to the church at Colossae . . .

**Colossians 1:9–14** ... For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. **13** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

God wants people to know his will. So He clearly reveals that it in his Word. Do you see that word “filled”? It literally means to be so permeated with the will of God that it has a controlling influence over our lives.

The will of God is the foundation of a believer’s character and conduct and it flows out of spiritual wisdom—the comprehension of biblical truth—and understanding—the application of biblical truth.



#### 4. DESIRE THE FATHER'S PROVISION

In the book of Proverbs, the Bible says that ***“the prayer of the upright is God’s delight.”*** I have news for you today. Your heavenly Father wants to give you more than you can even ask. That’s why Jesus taught His disciples to pray for ***“daily bread.”***

Martin Luther commented on this particular request...

**Everything necessary for the preservation of this life is “bread,” including food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government, and peace.**

Paul wrote, ***“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19)*** Isn’t this amazing? The God of the universe wants us to depend on Him for our needs. When we do that, we are in essence saying. . .

**Father, I trust you to meet my deepest needs. Glorify Yourself in my daily provision. Display your power and the glory of your eternal kingdom as you did when You provided the manna and the meat for the Jewish people in the wilderness.**

#### 5. DESIRE THE FATHER'S PURITY

***“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*** Why did Jesus include this prayer of confession and cleansing in His pattern of prayer? Now keep in mind here that the issue is not salvation. It is fellowship. Unconfessed sin robs the believer of fellowship with his/her *Father in Heaven*.

**Proverbs 28:13...** He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

**2 Corinthians 7:1**... Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**1 John 1:9**... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

John MacArthur made this comment about the need for confession. . .

**I have seen Christians, judicially forgiven and eternally secure, who for a time can be hardened by willful sin, so impenitent, so unconfessing, so insensitive to that sin, and so totally joyless that they did not even know the meaning of a loving intimate fellowship with God.**

Please note the condition. **We must forgive others!** This is a kingdom requirement. It is not up for debate. How can we who have been forgiven withhold forgiveness from those who hurt us? I want to make this perfectly clear. Your purity before the Father depends in some part upon your forgiveness of others.

**Matthew 6:14–15**... **“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

## **6. DESIRE THE FATHER’S PROTECTION**

*“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”* As a believer, you are living out your life in a fallen world. Powerful spiritual enemies are poised to take you down. The word “temptation” refers to testing or proving. James made sure we would understand this request when He wrote. . .

**James 1:13**... Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

So why are to incorporate this request into our prayer life? This is the expression of a believer who so fears and despises sin that he/she wants to *avoid temptation* rather than *defeat it*. This petition is a safeguard against presumption. Paul wrote. . .

**Ephesians 6:10–13**... Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **13** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

We must appropriate God's protection in prayer!

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." This doxology may be considered in at least a threefold way: (1) as an expression of holy and joyful praise; (2) as a plea to carry out the petitions; (3) as a confirmation and declaration of confidence that the prayer will be heard.<sup>6</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Prayer is heaven's love language. It is not a religious ritual nor is it meaningless repetition of well-worn phrases. Jesus gave us a pattern of prayer that can enrich our prayer lives immeasurably.

**Delight in the Father's Position.**

**Desire the Father's Provision.**

**Delight in the Father's Praise.**

**Desire the Father's Purity.**

**Delight in the Father's Purpose.**

**Desire the Father's Protection.**

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, [\*The Lord's Prayer\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2005), Mt 6:13.

## Appendix

**EL, ELOAH [el, el-oh-ah]:** God "mighty, strong, prominent" ([Nehemiah 9:17](#); [Psalm 139:19](#)) – etymologically, *El* appears to mean “power” and “might” ([Genesis 31:29](#)). *El* is associated with other qualities, such as integrity ([Numbers 23:19](#)), jealousy ([Deuteronomy 5:9](#)), and compassion ([Nehemiah 9:31](#)), but the root idea of “might” remains.

**ELOHIM [el-oh-heem]:** God “Creator, Mighty and Strong” ([Genesis 17:7](#); [Jeremiah 31:33](#)) – the plural form of *Eloah*. Being plural, *Elohim* accommodates the doctrine of the Trinity. From the Bible’s first sentence, the superlative nature of God’s power is evident as God (*Elohim*) speaks the world into existence ([Genesis 1:1](#)).

**EL SHADDAI [el-shah-dahy]:** “God Almighty,” “The Mighty One of Jacob” ([Genesis 49:24](#); [Psalm 132:2,5](#)) – speaks to God’s ultimate power over all.

**ADONAI [ædɒˈnaɪ; ah-daw-nahy]:** “Lord” ([Genesis 15:2](#); [Judges 6:15](#)) – used in place of YHWH, which was thought by the Jews to be too sacred to be uttered by sinful men. In the Old Testament, YHWH is more often used in God’s dealings with His people, while *Adonai* is used more when He deals with the Gentiles.

**YHWH / YAHWEH / JEHOVAH [yah-way / ji-hoh-veh]:** “LORD” ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [Daniel 9:14](#)) – strictly speaking, the only proper name for God. Translated in English Bibles “LORD” (all capitals) to distinguish it from *Adonai*, “Lord.” The revelation of the name is given to Moses “I Am who I Am” ([Exodus 3:14](#)). This name specifies an immediacy, a presence. Yahweh is present, accessible, near to those who call on Him for deliverance ([Psalm 107:13](#)), forgiveness ([Psalm 25:11](#)) and guidance ([Psalm 31:3](#)).

**YAHWEH-JIREH** [*yah-way-ji-reh*]: "The Lord Will Provide" ([Genesis 22:14](#)) – the name memorialized by Abraham when God provided the ram to be sacrificed in place of Isaac.

**YAHWEH-RAPHA** [*yah-way-raw-faw*]: "The Lord Who Heals" ([Exodus 15:26](#)) – "I am Jehovah who heals you" both in body and soul. In body, by preserving from and curing diseases, and in soul, by pardoning iniquities.

**YAHWEH-NISSI** [*yah-way-nee-see*]: "The Lord Our Banner" ([Exodus 17:15](#)), where [\*banner\*](#) is understood to be a rallying place. This name commemorates the desert victory over the Amalekites in [Exodus 17](#).

**YAHWEH-M'KADDESH** [*yah-way-meh-kad-esh*]: "The Lord Who Sanctifies, Makes Holy" ([Leviticus 20:8](#); [Ezekiel 37:28](#)) – God makes it clear that He alone, not the law, can cleanse His people and make them holy.

**YAHWEH-SHALOM** [*yah-way-shah-lohm*]: "The Lord Our Peace" ([Judges 6:24](#)) – the name given by Gideon to the altar he built after the Angel of the Lord assured him he would not die as he thought he would after seeing Him.

**YAHWEH-ELOHIM** [*yah-way-el-oh-him*]: "LORD God" ([Genesis 2:4](#); [Psalm 59:5](#)) – a combination of God's unique name *YHWH* and the generic word for "God" signifying that He is the Lord who is God.

**YAHWEH-TSIDKENU** [*yah-way-tzid-kay-noo*]: "The Lord Our Righteousness" ([Jeremiah 33:16](#)) – As with *YHWH-M'Kaddesh*, it is God alone who provides righteousness (from the Hebrew word *tsidkenu*) to man, ultimately in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, who became sin for us "that we might become the Righteousness of God in Him" ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

**YAHWEH-ROHI [yah-way-roh-hee]:** "The Lord Our Shepherd" ([Psalm 23:1](#)) – After David pondered his relationship as a shepherd to his sheep, he realized that was exactly the relationship God had with him, and so he declares, "The Lord is my shepherd [*Yahweh-Rohi*]; I shall not want" ([Psalm 23:1, ESV](#)).

**YAHWEH-SHAMMAH [yah-way-sham-mahw]:** "The Lord Is There" ([Ezekiel 48:35](#)) – the name ascribed to Jerusalem and the Temple there, indicating that the once-departed glory of the Lord ([Ezekiel 8—11](#)) had returned ([Ezekiel 44:1-4](#)).

**YAHWEH-SABAOTH [yah-way-sah-bah-ohth]:** "The Lord of Hosts" ([Isaiah 1:24](#); [Psalm 46:7](#)) – *Hosts* means "hordes," both of angels and of men. He is Lord of the host of heaven and of the inhabitants of the earth, of Jews and Gentiles, of rich and poor, master and slave. The name is expressive of the majesty, power, and authority of God and shows that He is able to accomplish what He determines to do.

**EL ELYON [el-el-yohn]:** "Most High" ([Deuteronomy 26:19](#)) – derived from the Hebrew root for "go up" or "ascend," so the implication is of that which is the very highest. *El Elyon* denotes exaltation and speaks of absolute right to lordship.

**EL ROI [el-roh-ee]:** "God of Seeing" ([Genesis 16:13](#)) – the name ascribed to God by Hagar, alone and desperate in the wilderness after being driven out by Sarah ([Genesis 16:1-14](#)). When Hagar met the Angel of the Lord, she realized she had seen God Himself in a theophany. She also realized that *El Roi* saw her in her distress and testified that He is a God who lives and sees all.

**EL-OLAM [el-oh-lahm]:** "Everlasting God" ([Psalm 90:1-3](#)) – God's nature is without beginning or end, free from all constraints of time, and He contains

within Himself the very cause of time itself. “From everlasting to everlasting, You are God” ([Psalm 90:2](#)).

**EL-GIBHOR [el-ghee-*bohr*]:** “Mighty God” ([Isaiah 9:6](#)) – the name describing the Messiah, Christ Jesus, in this prophetic portion of Isaiah. As a powerful and mighty warrior, the Messiah, the Mighty God, will accomplish the destruction of God’s enemies and rule with a rod of iron ([Revelation 19:15](#)).